



**South Willamette Street Improvement Plan
June 2012- June 2013**

Think

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PLAN

INTRODUCTION

Guiding Principles

- Respect the intelligence of the public
- Seek out and facilitate the involvement of those potentially affected
- Identify issues and concerns early and throughout the process
- Widely disseminate complete information in a timely manner
- Include the public's contribution in decisions
- Report how input was considered & reasons for decisions in each phase
- Encourage open and honest communication

Goals

- Broad participation
- Confidence in process integrity
- Timely, authentic & useful public input
- Thoughtful responses to individual comments, concerns, questions
- Public information on city policies, such as the 20-minute neighborhood

Decisions and Roles

A Project Management Team that includes the City of Eugene, Oregon Department of Transportation and DKS Associates consulting team will guide this 13-month long project. The Project Management Team will gather input at four critical junctures from the Technical Advisory Committee, a series of stakeholder conversations, and public meetings to help formulate plans and give feedback as they evolve to a preferred alternative. It will then move to Eugene's Planning Commission and City Council for approval.

KEY ELEMENTS OF PLAN

- Stakeholder Outreach Meetings at four junctures
- Focus Groups on two key perspectives: Businesses & Users
- Community Meetings at three points: Alternatives, Evaluation, & Refinement
- Direct Outreach (street displays, speaking with organizations)
- Meetings with Planning Commission & City Council

Stakeholder Outreach Meetings (Four times at specific project steps)

Identified individuals, who are directly impacted or represent key issues and regularly communicate with their constituencies, will be consulted throughout the project, and function as advisors with an ear to the ground. Developed in collaboration with the City, an inclusive analysis of stakeholders will be the basis for this dynamic stakeholders' list.

#1 Stakeholder Outreach Meetings August- up to 6 small groups):

- Establish positive relationship
- Explain project overview and parameters
- Ensure the public involvement plan will work for them
- Learn how to communicate with their constituencies (i.e. newsletters, websites, guest speaker, high volume events)
- Collect input on existing conditions, problem statement, goals, and evaluation criteria
- Listen for other ideas and alternatives to be considered
- Identify any "hot button" issues and highly concerned individuals

#2 Stakeholder Outreach Meeting (January 2013- up to 4 small groups):

- Collect input on results of Tier 1 Screening analysis
- Listen for concerns, questions, new information
- Get information to those with constituencies in formats to easily shared

#3 Stakeholder Outreach Meeting (May 2013- up to 4 small groups):

- Collect input on results to Tier 2 Screening analysis
- Listen for concerns, questions, new information
- Get information to those with constituencies in formats easily shared

#4 Stakeholder Outreach Meeting (June 2013- up to 4 small groups):

- Collect input on Draft Plan
- Listen for concerns, questions, new information
- Get information to those with constituencies in formats easily shared

Two Focus Groups (September 2012)

Focus Groups tap the insight and knowledge of local experts and advocates to identify creative solutions to core challenges and provide a venue for explaining limitations and tradeoffs in a small setting. Consultants can get feedback on assumptions and help on challenges. Participants will learn more about the study area and expand the pool of people who can be articulate about the complexities, and contribute to setting realistic project goals and parameters.

Focus groups were organized by constituency, such as (1) Corridor Users-- bicycle, pedestrian, bus and car commuters and (2) Businesses & Property Owners.

The Focus Groups, ranging from twelve to twenty participants, were held in a group discussion format and included the wisdom and experiences of:

- Bicyclists, Pedestrians and Transit Users

- Owners, customers, and employees of area businesses
- Residents who live in or near the Project Study Area
- Commuters living to the south, who use Willamette Street
- People with physical disabilities
- Seniors

All Focus Groups invitees will receive a project update that shows how their input affected the outcome to date. Why did some ideas move forward, while others seem to have dropped off the table? We will also invite their ongoing participation and ask them to help us to expand the public engagement.

Public Events

Three large community meetings will build on the knowledge gained from the Stakeholder Meetings and Focus Groups. Well advertised, meetings will have an engaging agenda, pleasant atmosphere, and amenities designed to maximize attendance and diversity, such as food and accommodations for people with disabilities. Public events also provide an opportunity to address the broader community through direct “street” outreach with displays prior to the event and media coverage of the event. The website offers an additional way to receive public input. Meeting Summaries will be emailed to all who attend and posted on the project website.

#1 Community Forum: Explore the Alternatives (November 2012)

This first meeting will introduce the project to the broader community and explain the role of the three public meetings in developing the preferred alternative. Public input will be collected on the existing conditions, deficiencies and needs, potential improvements and evaluation criteria. Ideas for improvements will be welcomed and evaluated.

#2 Community Forum: Evaluate the Alternatives (February 2013)

The second meeting will welcome new participants and recap the project. Three to six alternatives will be presented in light of how they meet Tier 1 evaluation criteria. This event will collect input to help narrow which two to three alternatives advance to Tier 2 screening.

#3 Community Forum: Refine the Preferred Alternative (May 2013)

The third meeting will present the results of Tier 2 evaluation, giving more information about the remaining alternatives for public consideration. The participants will be asked to give input in regards to a preferred alternative.

Planning Commission & City Council

The project team will keep the Planning Commission and City Council informed, and will meet to review alternatives with them prior to the second public event, and again in the formal process of adoption during the summer and fall of 2013.

Website

The City will develop a webpage that is interesting, visually pleasing, and easy to navigate and understand. It will have a unique project masthead and include key project information, including a brief overview, meeting dates, other public involvement opportunities, and a library of technical memos and public involvement summaries. The website will provide the opportunity for public comments and questions, and will be regularly monitored.

Interested Parties List

Cogito will develop a comprehensive Interested Parties List that identifies individuals based on their connection to the project. All interested parties will receive project information and invitations to the Community Forums. The project will use the City's existing list, and connect to organizations' lists with interest in the project. Additionally, Cogito will collect contact information from those we meet during "street" outreach with display boards.

Display Outreach

As a method of outreach prior to each Community Forum, Cogito will staff display boards where there is high-volume foot traffic. This expands the base of who attends the meeting, shares accurate information with those who do not attend, provides the project with a broader view of public concerns and sentiments, and ensures that the public involvement results are representative. Display board graphics are also used at the Community Forums, speaking engagements, and provide the high quality graphics required for media.

Media

While there is not a budget for media work for this project, the city will use media to advertise public events and seek to gain media coverage of public events to reach a broader audience. To the degree the project generates discussion in the media, the project will monitor and respond with accurate information, if necessary.

Public Comments

Calls and emails about the project will be received by the city and routed to the appropriate staff person to answer the question or respond to the comment. This is critical, as thoughtful and timely responses to vocal advocates earns trust and credibility. The city will catalogue all comments and responses, and share with the project team in a timely manner for consideration.

Level of Public Involvement

According to the ODOT Public Involvement Resource Guide, the South Willamette Street Improvement Plan ranks “Tier 3”: Complex repair, safety, replacement or modernization scope of work. Public involvement for this project will be comprehensive, ongoing, and target a variety of key stakeholders. According to the principles of International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) Spectrum of Public Involvement, the process will range from “inform” to “collaborate.” We will also use the Hans & Anne Marie Bleiker Strategic Development of Informed Consent (SDIC) method to check-in with identified stakeholders.